DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 048 411 UD 011 357

TITLE	Group Counseling for Urban Schools: A Handbook.
INSTITUTION	Pennsylvania Advancement School, Philadelphia.
SPONS AGENCY	Office of Education (DHEW), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	71
NOTE	82p.
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS	Curriculum Development, *Elementary School Students, Federal Programs, *Group Counseling, Group Dynamics, Internship Programs, *Junior High School Students, Staff Improvement, Student Problems, *Underachievers, *Urban Schools
IDENTIFIERS	Elementary Secondary Education Act, ESEA Title III Programs, ESEA Title I Programs, PAS, Pennsylvania Advancement School

ABSTRACT

Established in September 1967 and funded under ESEA Title I and Title III, the Pennsylvania Advancement School (PAS) is a non-profit corporation under contract to the School District of Philadelphia. Funds from the Education Professions Development Act and from private foundations have been used to support small projects initiated by the school. About 200 underachieving boys, were selected from the fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth grades of Philadelphia public and parochial schools. During the first two years of PAS, boys remained for a 14-week term; currently the students attend for an entire schcol year. The PAS program also includes curriculum development, intern training, and staff development activities. During 1970-71, PAS is helping to prepare a core staff group for the opening of a new middle school in September of 1971. In its external staff development program, PAS works closely with groups of teachers and administrators in six Philadelphia public schools, helping each to plan and operate semi-autonomous units called "minischools." PAS conducts an intensive summer program for these groups and several PAS staff members are assigned full-time to help the minischools during the school year. (Author/JM)

GROUP COUNSELING FOR URBAN SCHOOLS: A HANDBOOK

Counseling Project

Established in Philadelphia in September, 1967, the Pennsylvania Advancement School (PAS) is a non-profit corporation under contract to the School District of Philadelphia. Its funding is from Title I and Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and from operating funds of the School District. In addition, funds from the Education Professions Development Act and from private foundations have been used to support smaller projects initiated by the school.

On two floors of a converted warehouse, a school is operated for about 200 underachieving boys, taken from the 5th, 6th, 7th and 8th grades of Philadelphia public and parochial schools. During the first two years of the Advancement School, boys remained for a 14-week term; currently the students attend for an entire school year.

The Advancement School is more than just a "school"; its program also includes curriculum development, intern training and staff development activities. During 1970-71, PAS is helping to prepare a core group of interns, teachers and administrators for the opening of a new middle school in September of 1971. In its external staff development program, PAS works closely with groups of teachers and administrators in six Philadelphia public schools, helping each to plan and operate semi-autonomous units called "minischools." The Advancement School conducts an intensive summer program for these groups and several PAS staff members are assigned full-time to help the minischools during the school year.

Foreword

When the Pennsylvania Advancement School opened in September 1967, little thought had been given to the counselors' contribution to the total program. Counselors simply worked with teams of teachers and groups of students. We taught some classes, developed curriculum, handled discipline problems, and were involved in a great many individual counseling situations. But there was no functioning counseling program outside of weekly meetings to discuss tapes of individual counseling sessions.

Before students arrived in the fall of 1968, we decided that we needed outside assistance to become an effective group that could provide useful services for students at P.A.S. and for the Philadelphia schools.

I felt that we could all benefit from a theoretical background in group process and from exercises that could help us think more creatively. A two-day workshop, led by Dr. Rodney Napier of Temple University provided us with a great deal of understanding of group behavior, and the framework of a counseling program. The next step was to clarify and refine that information and to begin planning for incoming students.

We used our meetings to share plans and refine ideas. We did not use any activity with P.A.S. students that we hadn't tried ourselves and discussed in detail. For example, the last ten minutes of each meeting of our counselors was used to discuss how we functioned as a

group. We took turns acting as "participant observer" to give constructive criticism to the group. We soon discovered that our growth as a group generally was corresponding to the growth of our student groups.*

We spent our meetings discussing how we as counselors functioned in groups and individual sessions. We were concerned with the basic dilemmas regarding our relationship with others: How democratic can I be? How authoritarian must I be? Our findings have been that we must first understand ourselves and how we affect others. Then we must be authentic in any situation.

While this handbook emphasizes our work with groups at P.A.S., we have also been involved in a counseling approach that moves the counselor out of the office, into classrooms, recreation areas, lunch rooms--anywhere students can be found. We've found that this approach enables a counselor to get to know his students and to establish a rapport that cannot be found in an office interview. Our counselors' knowledge of group functioning has also been a useful resource to students, staff and community as well.

This handbook provides a rationale, and description of techniques we used in our work with groups at the Pennsylvania Advancement School from 1968 to 1970. We decided to focus on group counseling because it seems to be an area that has been least explored and used as a

*Our general experience has shown that student groups tend to reach a level of trust and openness more quickly than adult groups in similar situations.

counseling tool. While some counselors in the Philadelphia school system already are using group counseling effectively, we hope this handbook can provide additional help to them and also will encourage others to explore this method.

There are many people who were responsible for this work. Peter Buttenwieser, Ralph Mosher, Rod Napier and Martin Cohen were instrumental in getting the counseling program off the ground. Josh Lofton, Cynthia Donaldson, Dennis Hawk, Charles Martin, John Bennett, Denis Osorio, Carole Calbanza and Reggie Kegler have served as either counselors, counseling interns or resource people at the Advancement School. Cynthia Donaldson and particularly Dennis Hawk were responsible for putting this information into readable form. Dana Johnson lent editing and rewriting assistance, Alice L. Riley was responsible for the final typing, and Harold Jones did the printing. The staff of the Advancement School was always available to provide information and assistance to our project.

We appreciate the continued support of Helen Faust and Margaret Carson of the Philadelphia School District's Division of Pupil Personnel and Counseling.

Rex Jarrell, Chairman
Counseling Project

Table of Contents

Counseling Handbook

There are a great number of students attending the schools of Philadelphia who are confused and troubled. They are often not able to live up to their learning potential. These students can be helped by their school counselors.

Yet counselors in Philadelphia are presently assigned a caseload of from 350 to 400 students. It is difficult for them to provide significant help to all of these students.

Group counseling is a promising approach which enables a counselor to reach more students. It also provides some advantages not available with the traditional one to one counseling relationship.

At the Pennsylvania Advancement School, we have experimented with the use of group counseling over the past two years. We believe that group counseling has helped our students and will be a valuable technique for counseling students in the public schools.

Our Students and Some Problems They Face

The students we work with at the Advancement School are 7th and 8th grade underachieving boys. Our student body represents a cross section of Philadelphia public schools, ranging from predominently black inner-city

schools to a predominently white middle class school. Parochial schools are also represented. The student body is 57% black, 37% white, and 6% Puerto Rican, reflecting approximately the racial proportions in the public schools. Students presently attend the school for one year. Students are selected to attend with average or above potential for learning, based on test scores and teacher recommendations, who have failed to live up to their learning potential in their home schools.

From our experience in working with urban, underachieving boys, we have found several problems which they have difficulty handling. We have attempted to identify these problems to help us formulate goals for our counseling program.

One of the problems that our students encounter is a lack of control over their environment and the institutions that affect their lives. For many students, recreational facilities are limited and jobs are difficult to find. Television shows them a life of affluence that is beyond their reach. School is often felt as being impersonal and unresponsive to their needs. Our students no longer see themselves as children yet they do not enjoy the privileges of adulthood. They are often admonished for their childish behavior yet they have little effective voice in controlling the world they live in. Because of their lack of experience, when they are given the responsibility for governing their lives, as deciding what they want to learn and how a classroom should be run,

they are often unable to take the initiative and feel confused and threatened by the task.

Another problem concerns their ambivalent feelings toward authority. Just as the institutions of the adult world are often unresponsive to their needs, so are the authorities, such as teachers, parents, and the police, who represent them. Students respond to authority, in many cases, either by submitting passively to its overwhelming power or by clashing with it. Dialogue with authority is often looked at with mistrust or rejected altogether as a viable alternative. The students at the Advancement School do a good deal of testing to establish their role with teachers within the new freedom they experience. At times, they even ask for an authoritarian approach when they feel unable to manage a situation using their own resources.

Another problem that our students face is dealing with peer pressure. Because they feel the adult world is hostile to their needs, our students have created their own values and power structure. An extreme outgrowth of this, which in the long run can prove distructive, is the street gang. Peer pressure sometimes resorts to the use of physical intimidation and sometimes results in the solidification of racial cliques. In both cases, the freedom and basic rights of the students are infringed upon by their own value system. In relating to their peers, it is important that students are able to resist and attempt to change destructive types of peer pressure.

An additional problem is lack of self-confidence. Because our students are underachievers, they have experienced and internalized feelings of failure as defined by the public schools. Frequently they have experienced this feeling of failure in other realms as well, such as with their families or with their peers. They have come to expect to fail. They find it difficult to plunge into new experiences or to experiment freely. Often, their first reaction is "I can't do it". Black students have the additional problem in many cases of ambivalent feelings about their race. Many continue to accept debilitating racial stereotypes despite a newly emerging racial pride in their culture and race.

Adolescence is normally a period of uncertainty. Our students are groping to form a sense of their unique self-identity and worth. They are concerned with questions of maleness, competence, race, and group acceptance. They are concerned with what their role will be in adulthood, and need to experiment with different roles and experiences. Yet adult society may unconsciously require them to continue in a role of dependency without genuine responsibility for their own lives. The schools presently tend to re-enforce this dependency.

Because of their lack of trust in others, they often find it difficult to express their feelings. Often they put on a front to conceal them. Some students present a "tough guy" image and seek to control the world aggressively. Others adopt a "good boy" image and submit to the pressures

about them in order to avoid conflict. Aggressiveness and submissiveness are different responses to a common fear these behaviors produce. This fear makes it difficult for them to become fully aware of their own identity or to work with and respond to the needs of others. The ability to co-operate with others, however, could potentially give them a greater measure of control in their affairs.

To summarize, our students encounter problems dealing with an adult world which is often impersonal and unresponsive to their needs. They have difficulty coping with authority figures and some forms of peer pressure. Frequently they lack confidence in themselves and have difficulty resolving questions concerning their personal identity. They have few effective means to control the forces that affect their lives yet they have a strong urge to escape the dependency role the adult world asks them to assume.

Goals For Our Students

We have set two broad goals in developing a counseling program to help our students deal with these problems. The first is to stimulate an increased awareness of self and others. The second is to develop coping skills to help deal with these problems.

An increased awareness of self and others raises a broad range of questions. Some concern one's own sense of identity. Who am I? What are my needs, capabilities, potential, and goals? What are the emotions I feel? What

makes me feel scared, happy, sad, angry? How does this affect my behavior?

Some of these questions involve how I relate to peers, parents, teachers, and others. What are my perceptions and feelings about other people and how does this affect my behavior? How do they perceive and feel about me and how does this affect their behavior? How do I relate to authority figures?

Some of these questions involve how I perceive and feel about my environment, the community I live in and the school I attend. How does this affect my behavior? Do others share the same feelings and perceptions?

Some of these questions involve how I function in a group. Do I hinder or facilitate the functioning of a group? How do others see my role in a group?

The second goal, learning coping skills, is an outgrowth of increased awareness of oneself and how one relates to others. With this increased awareness, a student can more realistically determine his own needs and goals and evaluate whether his behavior helps him achieve them. Counseling should suggest alternate behaviors and provide an opportunity to experiment with them when a student desires change. By being aware of how people respond to different behaviors, a student can choose between them and be able to affect the responses of others. For example, a student who is prone to settling conflicts with others by fighting may experiment with nonphysical methods of resolving conflict and find them more rewarding.

Coping means anticipating problems as well as contending with immediate problems. Coping involves a recognition of limits to behavior and a sensitivity to the needs of others. Coping includes demanding and working for change in the world one lives when necessary. This may be a change in the curriculum of a school or increased recreational facilities in one's community. Coping does not mean a mere acceptance of things as they are.

An increased awareness of self and others can help the student with personal feelings such as anger, fear, and frustration. Increased and more flexible coping skills can bolster a student's confidence and sense of control.

Rationale For Group Counseling

The counseling approach we are developing relies heavily on group counseling. Group counseling has been used extensively with adults for some time. It has proven an effective method in increasing sensitivity and opening up communication in a wide range of groups from executives to drug addicts. Its use with children has been relatively little explored, however.

We feel that group counseling for our students offers considerable potential for meeting our goals for helping students. One reason is group counseling can provide more resources for self-exploration and student learning than the traditional one to one counseling relationship. A student can share his perceptions, feelings, and problems with all the members of the group, his peers as well as

an adult. The group can provide support and feedback representing a range of viewpoints. The student can learn directly how others in the group perceive and feel about him. The group can give the students experience in working through interpersonal conflicts as they occur in the group.

Since so much of a student's time is spent in groups, whether in school or other organized activities, at home with his family, or with his friends, groups are a natural setting for counseling. The counseling group can help the student function more effectively in the groups that he participates in every day. By learning how his behavior affects the other members of the group, the student may choose and experiment with alternate behaviors that may prove more rewarding to him. The group can provide its members with experience in decision-making and leadership.

The counselor, by observing how his groups function, can provide valuable feedback to teachers on how to work with the students in his groups. The group can provide a setting for exploring and working through classroom difficulties. Students who desire to change behavior which is motivated by peer pressure, such as a student who disrupts a class to gain the attention of his friends, are more likely to succeed if they discuss their decision within a group of their peers. Although a student may genuinely desire to change his behavior when speaking individually to a counselor, he will have a difficult time when he confronts the peer pressure that caused the original behavior in the first place. By discussing the

desire to change with a group of his peers, the group members can help to re-enforce the decision rather than work against it.

The group may help to motivate behavior change by providing feedback on behavior which the group feels is undesirable. For example, a group might tell a student that his disruptive behavior in class actually turns them off because they would prefer to remain involved in the classwork.

Group counseling provides the counselor with an additional skill in providing the best services for children. It may also enlarge the number of students he is able to reach. Philadelphia counselors are assigned a minimum of 400 students and sometimes have more. Under ideal conditions, if a counselor desired to see all of his students, he would only be able to see each one for an hour during the entire school year considering his other responsibilities. Most counselors are not even able to achieve this. A counselor working with groups of eight, ten, or twelve students would, however, be able to expand his student contacts without taking away from time needed to see students individually and to perform his other duties.

Despite our heavy reliance on group counseling, individual counseling still has an important place in our program. Many crisis situations arise that require immediate individual attention. Students with serious emotional problems require individual attention in addition to group counseling. Some students feel freer to discuss some of

their feelings and problems in individual sessions rather than in the group although it is sometimes surprising how open students are in a group.

Role Of The Counselor

The role taken by the counselor is an important part of any counseling situation. The counselor is in a position, because of his experience and training, to offer special help to the students that he works with. In a group counseling situation, a counselor needs to be sensitive to each of the group members and how they interact with each other. It is equally important that a counselor is aware of his own needs and how he interacts in a group if he is to facilitate the growth of his counseling groups.

When a counselor initiates a counseling group, he is generally seen by his students as the dominant member of the group. Because the counselor is an adult and a member of the school hierarchy, students tend to view him as evaluative, manipulative, and superior. The dominant position of the counselor readily engenders a sense of powerlessness and dependency in the students.

The counselor may use his superior position to fulfil his own need for control. Similarly, the counselor may use the counseling situation to fulfil his need for acceptance by giving his time to individuals who have a problem and who need help. The counselor may fulfil his need to feel comfortable by giving his time to individuals who are younger and more vulnerable than himself. By being

aware of these needs in himself, the counselor can avoid letting these needs shape the counseling situation.

Counseling should provide an opportunity for the students to examine and discuss rather than to re-endorce the sense of dependency and powerlessness that they so often feel in the adult world. The counselor can help the group accomplish this by providing the students with an environment where the students in the group can learn from each other. The counselor is responsible for providing the basic structure and setting limits to make this possible.

By becoming a participating member of the group, the counselor can do much toward establishing a rapport with his students and changing the negative aspects of their first impression of him. By being open and frank, the counselor can build trust. By encouraging the students to speak to all the members of the group rather than to just the counselor, the counselor can shift the focus of the students away from himself. By encouraging the students to question the purpose of what they do, the students can have a voice in running the group. As the group develops group skills, the counselor can entrust the students with increased responsibility for planning and carrying out activities within the group. As a participating member of the group, the counselor can help set a relaxed, non-threatening atmosphere which will make it easier for the students to look at themselves and express their feelings.

Use of Activities

The response of adults and children in a group counseling situation is in some ways quite different and calls for a different approach. Many adult groups rely almost exclusively on discussion. Talking about problems seems to make adults feel comfortable and at times is a way of avoiding real concerns. For example, adults might go on and on about how hard it is for them to express emotions and actually use that discussion as a way of avoiding expressing emotion.

Our students are not as facile as adults in the use of words and become uncomfortable in extended discussions. They are more direct, spontaneous, and impatient than adults. If a student does not like something, he will usually come right out and say so. Although not as verbal as adults, our students are much more freer physically. They enjoy roleplaying situations which are relevant to them. They readily engage in physical activities and games which can provide valuable learning experiences in how they relate to each other and feel about each other. Our counseling sessions, therefore, rely much more on physical activities and games and less on discussion than usually occurs with adults. Discussion is seen as a supplement to clarify and re-enforce experiential learning rather than as the only method to be us ed in a counseling situation.

One example of an activity we use with our students is called "leading the blind", Half the members of a

counseling group are blindfolded and paired off with members who can still see. The students who can still see are asked to help guide their blind partners to another location in the building. This may involve avoiding obstacles placed in their path or going up and down stairs. After reaching their destination, the students reverse roles to give everyone in the group a chance to both help and be helped.

Discussion following this activity can center on the students feelings while they were blind. The counselor might ask how it felt to be blind and to need help. Did you trust the person who helped you? What kinds of behavior helped to build trust? Did your helper touch or hold on to you while you were being guided? Did you understand his directions? Did he try to rush you or did he let you go at your own pace? Did your helper feel concerned about you? Each student may be given a chance to provide feedback on the degree of trust he felt in the person who was guiding him. The objective of this activity is to stimulate discussion about trust and helping behaviors. Students should be given an opportunity to reach their own conclusions about the kinds of behavior that build trust from their experience.

Another activity which focuses on group co-operation is to have several students line up next to each other and to securely tie their legs together at the ankles. The group is then asked to walk across the room. Almost invariably, the students start out without considering the

implications of being tied together. They fail to coordinate leg movements, some students attempt to go faster than others, and the whole group is soon sprawled out on the floor in a heap. The group is then given time to plan a strategy for working together and a second chance to cross the room. It is usually best to start with a group of three or four students and then add more to avoid excessive confusion and frustration.

Discussion following this activity can be used to evaluate how well the students worked together. The students might be asked what behaviors helped and what behaviors hindered accomplishing their task. How did they plan a strategy? Did they have one leader or did they share leadership? This activity could be used to accomplish a number of objectives such as stimulating discussion about how people communicate in a group, roles people take in a group, decision-making or group cohesiveness.

An activity which can help students begin to give feedback about how they perceive and feel about the other members of the group is "positive and negative feedback". A volunteer sits in the center while the rest of the group sits in a circle around him. Each person in the circle in turn describes one thing about the person in the middle that they like, explaining why, and one thing about that person that they don't like, explaining why. The person in the middle has a chance to respond after each person describes what he likes and dislikes. The counselor should make clear to the students that they should describe something about how the person behaves that they like or dislike

and not about his appearance. The counselor should also make clear that the purpose of the activity is to let us know how other people see us and not to hurt someones feelings. Although the activity seems threatening, the students generally respond enthusiastically and are eager to volunteer.

Roleplaying is an activity that can be used at many different times in a counseling group. When a student is describing a problem he is having with another person, for example with a teacher, it is frequently helpful for the student to roleplay himself and to ask another member of the group to roleplay the teacher, after the student has described the situation. Roleplaying can make the situation more concrete and increase the involvement of the other group members. Discussion following the role-playing may suggest alternative ways for the student to handle the situation which will be more rewarding to him. The group can provide the student with a nonthreatening setting for experimenting with alternative behaviors in a roleplaying situation. The counselor also might create roleplaying situations to stimulate a discussion about a particular subject. For example, the students might roleplay a situation where one student tries to persuade another to help him shoplift a model car while they are in a hobby store or one student might try to persuade another student to help him cheat on a test to stimulate a discussion about peer pressure.

An activity which can help focus the students attention on listening more closely to each other is "grandmother's trunk". The students sit in a circle. One person starts off by saying "in my grandmother's trunk I found a _____," and he gives the name of some object such as a book. The next person in the circle has to repeat exactly what the first person said and then add another object. The game continues around the circle until someone can not repeat the growing list. The game requires that the students listen carefully to each other if they are to be successful.

There are many other activities which we use with our students which are described at the end of this paper. They can be used to help accomplish a wide range of objectives. Some activities can be used to stimulate discussion about concerns of the students such as school, personal values, or relations with their families and peers. Other activities can stimulate discussion about how their group functions such as the roles people take in a group, leadership, how people communicate and make decisions in a group, trust, and how individuals perceive other group members.

Before using an activity with students, it is usually helpful if the counselor goes through the activity himself, if possible, to better understand the nature of the activity and its appropriateness for what he is trying to accomplish. The counselor may come up with a variation of the activity or an entirely new activity which is more appropriate for his students and objectives.

Planning A Counseling Session

In planning for a counseling session, we first decide what objectives we would like to accomplish during that session. We then work out activities which will help us accomplish those objectives. The following is a sample lesson plan for the first session of a counseling group.

First Meeting

Objectives:

1. to understand purpose of counseling group
2. to understand operating rules of counseling group
3. begin to develop positive group feeling and trust
4. begin to share information about each other

Rationale:

1. Students need to understand purpose of the counseling group for them to accept it seriously, especially since it is an unfamiliar experience for them.
2. Rules and expectations need to be clarified since they differ from a regular classroom. The need to listen to others need to be stressed.
3. Positive group feeling is essential if the students are to feel free to talk and function together in future sessions. Students need to get to know and trust one another.

Procedure:

1. Have students sit in a circle.
2. Warmup - lead students in rubbing hands together briskly and stretching exercise.
3. Briefly introduce myself, explain when we will meet and rules of the group. The group will meet once a week to evaluate progress.

4. Play "grandmother's trunk" to stress the need to listen to each other.

5. Ask students to respond in turn to the following questions to help them get to know each other and to share information.

    a. If a stranger gave you a million dollars, how would you spend it?

    b. What do you like to do to enjoy yourself when you have free time?

    c. What qualities do you look for in your close friends?

6. Do "leading the blind" activity followed by a discussion of the student's feelings of trust. Stress need to help other members of the group.

7. Introduce idea of processing and have students process the meeting.

8. Conclude with proudwhip.

Materials needed:

Blindfolds for "leading the blind" activity.

Evaluation:

Students (who are in the group), counselor (group leader), teachers and administrators determine if group is meeting its stated purpose.

The described session is overpacked with activities. They might work in one session or they might extend over a period of 5 or 6 sessions. The activities used in this group plan were selected to help the students understand the overall goals of the counseling group. The goals of the group are explained to the students as the ability to listen and understand what each person has to say, to share information and feelings with each other, and to help each other learn more about ourselves and how we get along with others. Grandmother's trunk

emphasizes the need to listen to others, the questions provide a first step for sharing information, and leading the blind emphasizes helping other people in an atmosphere of trust.

A warmup can be useful to help get a group quickly working together and attentive. Sometimes, when the students come in after a dull class and without much enthusiasm, a very active warmup can pick things up. At other times, when the students come in hyperactive, it is helpful to start the group with a relaxing exercise to help calm them down.

During the final activity, the "proudwhip", each student in turn completes the statement "I am proud of _____". This activity concludes the session by letting the students share positive feelings. A student has the option to pass if he does not want to contribute. Activities and questions during a first session should be relatively nonthreatening since the students are just beginning to function together.

Although a counselor should have a clear idea of what he would like to accomplish during a session and what activities he would like to use, he should also be flexible enough to adjust or completely drop his lesson plan during the actual session. Some problem or concern voiced by the students might come up which supersedes in importance whatever the counselor had planned. For example, something might have happened earlier in a class or a student might have been involved in a fight, which makes

it difficult for the group to concentrate on anything else. The counselor should be able to help the students with these immediate problems as they come up. Also some activities just might not go over with a particular group of students and the counselor should be prepared to substitute another activity when necessary. Often, your best sessions are times when you disgard your original plans to deal with an immediate problem of the students.

During the first few sessions, the counselor provides an overall structure and sets the limits which will affect how the group develops. The students will quickly realize that a counseling group is different from a regular class, that the atmosphere is less formal, and that many of the activities seem like games. If the students do not understand the purpose of the counseling group and accept the limits that you set, they will see counseling as just an opportunity to play around. The purpose of the group and of the activities that you use should be clear not only at the beginning but during all of your counseling sessions. Students should be encouraged to question the reason for doing any of the activities that they do not understand. The limits that are set should be simple and consistently maintained. The main rule is usually that only one student should speak at a time and that no one should interrupt or destroy something that someone else is working on.

Establishing a clear structure at the outset will usually help considerably the process of giving the students more responsibility in the group. Although this

is a goal for the group, reaching this goal is a gradual process. Asking students to assume too much responsibility at first will usually be confusing and frustrating both for themselves and the counselor.

The number and type of activities that you plan to use during a session will be determined by the response of the students. Some groups are more comfortable with discussions and do not require the change of pace and stimulus provided by activities that other groups which are less verbal require. Also, the number of activities will be determined by your objectives. Some sessions might best be spent entirely in discussion.

In planning a session, a counselor should have specific objectives in mind that he would like to accomplish during that session. The objectives that a counselor chooses will be a result of the nature of the counseling group and the stage of development that the group is in. For example, if a group is set up to deal with a limited problem that its members share such as truancy, the counselor may choose not to explore in depth how the members of the group relate to each other. If the group is at a stage of development where it is having difficulty making decisions together, the counselor may decide to deal with the issue of group decision-making as his primary objective for one or more sessions.

The counselor should keep a written record of his lesson plans including his objectives, the rationale for his objectives, and the procedure and activities to be

used in the session. After a session, it is valuable for the counselor to write down how the students responded in the session. He should note the role that students took in the group such as who withdrew, who was involved, who took over leadership, etc. He should write down how the students responded to each activity and any changes in his plans that he feels would have been helpful. The counselor should evaluate how effectively his objectives were accomplished and use this evaluation to help plan what his objectives will be in his next session. A careful write-up of each session will help the counselor evaluate what change might have occurred, both in the group and in individual students over the period of time that the counselor sees the group. The following is an example of a write-up based on the lesson plan included previously in this paper.

First Session - Group A

Students Absent: None

Students in general quiet and reserved at first except for Bruce who came in room bouncing a ball. Bruce was the most talkative boy during the session and seems to have a strong need to gain attention, both from me and the other boys. All the boys seemed attentive and interested except Tom who seemed to resent missing his gym class. Need to talk to him about this.

Warmup helped to loosen students up although several seemed to feel self-conscious at first, especially Nick. Students enjoyed grandmother's trunk and managed to repeat successfully 18 objects on their second try. I had to

remind Bruce and Jay several times not to give the answer to boys who had difficulty remembering. Both Nick and John seemed nervous when their turn came.

Questions were a little awkward at first. Nick, John, and Ted gave very short responses during their turns but the other boys seemed to enjoy talking. Alex seemed very involved when talking about his tropical fish, but the other boys did not pay much attention to him. Jack tried to impress the other boys when talking about his athletic ability.

In leading the blind, the students worked well together except for Bruce and Jay who deliberately misled each other and played around. In discussion afterwards, however, Bruce made some good comments telling how he felt when Jay misled him. Tom felt the activity was childish but went along with it.

All the students except Tom seemed to understand the purpose of the activities and to enjoy them, especially toward the end of the period. The last of the three questions did not seem to interest the students, however.

A tape recording can provide a more detailed account than a written write-up of what happens in a counseling group. The counselor can evaluate how effectively he himself relates to the students by listening to the tape. He may pick up from the tape important aspects of how he relates to the students or how the students relate to each other that he missed in the actual session because he was directly involved in what was happening. The tapes, like

the written write-up of a session, can be used to evaluate the progress of a group over a period of time.

The tapes can also be of value to the students. By listening to a tape, the students can take an objective look at themselves and their own interaction in a group. For example, it is sometimes difficult for a disruptive student to realize how his interruptions affect a group. By listening to a tape of himself interrupting others, however, he can observe from a detached position how his behavior might antagonize others and hinder the functioning of a group.

If a counselor tape records a session, he should make clear at the beginning how the tapes will be used and who will listen to them. We tell our students that no one will listen to their tapes except the members of the group itself and other members of the counseling department to help the counselor evaluate and improve his counseling sessions. We also tell the students that anything they say on the tape will not affect him outside the group. If someone else wants to hear a tape, it will only be with the permission of all the group members.

Videotape, if available, is especially valuable for recording activities that involve physical movement and nonverbal communication such as roleplaying. Videotape can be used to record students in a classroom. When the students watch themselves in a counseling group, they can use a checklist to check off their classroom behaviors and then discuss them. (see activities list)

The progress of a group can also be evaluated by repeating activities such as "who am I" at different times during the groups' development. "Who am I" involves the use of a checklist with a number of adjectives such as friendly, unfriendly, generous, mean, happy, etc. which can describe a person. The students check off the adjectives that they feel apply for each member of the group. By comparing how the students see each other at different times, the counselor can judge how the group has progressed. A student who might have been seen as mean and a bully the first time might be seen as more friendly the second time if his behavior has changed.

It is also helpful to keep track of where the students sit, who they sit next to, and who they choose to work with. Their seating arrangement will usually form a rough sociogram and show subgroupings within the group. Comparing seating arrangements at different times may indicate changes in the group. The counselor might also use this information as part of a group discussion.

Stages Of Group Development

It is difficult to pinpoint specific stages of development within our groups. Generally, however, in the first few sessions there tends to be a little self-conscious and wary of the other members of the group. They do not know each other or the counselor and are unsure what to expect. The group sessions during this period should be relatively nonthreatening with activities aimed

at helping the students get to know and feel comfortable with each other and to build a sense of trust and cohesion within the group.

The students rather quickly enter a testing stage. They test whatever limits are set up by the counselor. They test each other. They test the purposes of the counseling group. This is perhaps the most frustrating stage in the group's development. Many of the students seem primarily concerned with themselves. They may frequently interrupt when other students are speaking. Some may attempt to withdraw from the group. The students vie with one another for influence and leadership within the group. Cliques may be formed. Students may question the purposes of counseling or find some of its activities childish. Usually, if the students are given the "who am I" during this period, there will be a pronounced negative cast to their perceptions of each other.

During the testing period, the counselor should be particularly sensitive to the dynamics within the group. Activities should be selected which will help clarify for the students what is happening within the group. The counselor needs to be firm and consistent in maintaining the structure and limits he has set up for the group.

The testing stage tapers into a stage which is a little more tranquil during which the students learn to accept each other with their faults. Leadership within the group becomes more clearly defined. The students are more open to learning about themselves and more concerned about how their behavior affects others. This relatively

tranquil period can be easily upset, however, and the testing phase readily reasserts itself.

As the students continue to learn to accept one another and help one another, they enter a fourth stage when they begin to take real responsibility for what they do. This varies considerably with different groups. Some groups have considerable difficulty getting out of the testing stage which others seem to pass over relatively easily. Activities which are relevant for one group may be totally irrelevant for another group for this reason. In some groups, the counselor is able to step aside, while the students plan some of their own sessions. One group conducted a counseling program for younger students.

Group Counseling In The Public Schools

Counselors who attended the summer workshop on counseling at the Advancement School have gone back and initiated counseling groups in their home schools during the past year. They have generally worked with groups of 8 to 10 students who volunteer for the counseling sessions. The counselor first interviews the students individually to explain the purpose and nature of the counseling group. The students in most of the groups were selected because they had a common problem such as truancy or difficulty in relating to their teachers. The activities of the group were then centered around the problem that the students had in common.

The groups differed from those at the Advancement School in some ways. They usually had fewer students, were mixed with both boys and girls rather than just boys, and were voluntary rather than required. At the Advancement School, all students were normally involved in counseling as a regular part of their schedule.

The counselors ran into a number of problems in setting up their counseling groups since the groups departed from the established routine of their home schools. Some of these problems were finding space for a group to meet, getting students excused once a week from their regular schedule, and explaining to skeptical staff members and fellow counselors the purpose of the groups. When the counselor had the active support of the school administration and his department head, these problems were usually easily overcome. Without administrative support, the counselor frequently had a difficult time with the logistics of setting up groups, but still, perhaps the most crucial problem that the counselors faced was their own sense of confidence in working with a group of students.

The groups in the public schools relied more on discussion and less on physical activities than groups at the Advancement School, partly because of space and physical limitations and partly because the more physical activities were felt to be less suited to a mixed group of boys and girls than to just a group of boys. Some activities that were found to be particularly useful were the fractured square, feedback activities such as Who I, decision making activities such as the bomb shelter,

and listening activities such as Grandmother's trunk.

A problem that the counselors found with their groups was when to terminate them. The counselors generally felt that the groups should be carefully evaluated after 6 to 8 weeks (depending upon type of group), to determine whether they should be continued or not.

In developing a counseling program at the Advancement School, we have found the support and ideas of all the members of the counseling department indispensible. By sharing our counseling experiences, we have been able to help each other refine our programs. We have met regularly to evaluate together what we are doing. We have tried many of our ideas for working with students on ourselves first. We have found that in schools where the counselors in a department support one another in implementing group counseling, there is a significant difference in performance and morale from a school where an individual from a department tries on his own to set up a group without the support of his colleagues.

The counselors working with groups in the public schools have on the whole felt that they were successful. One counselor stated that "You can make the best laid plans with a student (in an individual session), but they can fall apart because he has to deal with the group. If the student can make his plans with the group, he is in a much stronger position to follow through on those plans".

Activity List

We have used the following activities in group counseling sessions at the Advancement School. The counselor should select activities after considering his objectives and his students. He may decide not to use any activities Some activities may work better with younger students than with older students. Some may work better with boys than with girls. The counselor should try to make variations in these activities or come up with entirely new activities when appropriate for his objectives, his students, or his style of working with students.

The activities in this list are divided into four sections. This first section contains activities involving a group working together at some task. They can be used to help stimulate discussion about how groups work together. The discussion can involve looking at such issues as the roles people take in groups, leadership, decision-making, communication, strategy, trust, and helping and hindering behaviors.

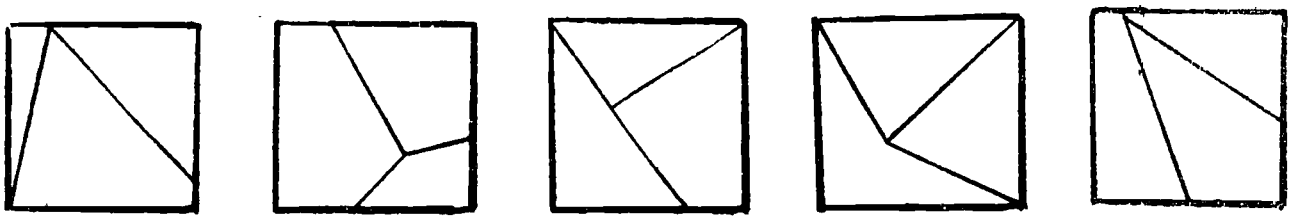
Fractured Square

The group task is to assemble a number of squares, each of which has been cut into three pieces. There should be four to six students in each group. The number of squares is equal to the number of people in the group. Each student is given three pieces to start with. Ask the students to follow three rules in assembling the squares.

1. You can give a piece to someone else, but you cannot grab another student's piece.
2. You can not talk.
3. You have a time limit of five minutes to assemble the squares.

After each group has had a chance to assemble their squares, tney may be given a short period to discuss how they did and to plan a strategy for a second try. Some students may be appointed as observers to note how the students in a group operate and to make sure that the rules are kept. The observers may be given a checklist of behaviors to watch for, or the students might generate their own checklist during the discussion of the first round. Examples of categories that students have suggested are grabber, helper, drop out, leader, talker, good off, etc.

Squares should be cut out of heavy cardboard. If the students have a second round, another set of squares should be cut from a different pattern and from a different colored cardboard to avoid mixing up the pieces. The following diagram suggests how the squares may be cut.



Model Building

The group task is to design and build a model using materials that they are given. For example, they may be given a set of plastic connecting pieces and be asked to build a machine that represents the group or they may be given cardboard, paper, and tape and be asked to build a tower. Other materials might be various sized wooden blocks, pieces from an erector set, or dowels with plastic connectors.

The students are given a time limit to design what they are going to build and to decide a suitable strategy for building it. They are required to use all the materials that they are given. After developing their plans, the group is given a time limit for building the model. Some students may be assigned as observers to report back to the group afterwards about how they worked together. The observers may be given a checklist of behaviors to watch for or they may use the checklist developed during fractured square.

If there is more than one group, time can be allotted for the groups to explain their models to the other groups.

If students have difficulty working together, it may be best for them to work in small groups or even pairs initially before they work in larger groups.

Acid Floor Test

The group task is to cross over an area which is thirty feet long. They are given six number ten tin cans to use and they are told that no part of their body may touch the ground because the ground is covered with acid. If a student does touch the ground in any way, he must go back to the starting line and begin again. A student can not touch the acid covered floor to set up or retrieve a can. Once a student reaches the other side, he can throw the cans he has back to those who are waiting to come across. The task is completed when all the group members and all the cans have reached the other side. The activity can be timed to see how long each group takes.

Before beginning the activity, the group should be given some time to plan a strategy. If the cans were placed as a continuous line of stepping stones across the entire distance, the distance between cans would be longer than is feasible for walking across. The group must therefore come up with a different strategy for using the cans.

Number ten cans may be obtained from the school cafeteria or a restaurant.

Blindfold Game

Students are divided into two or more groups. Each group is assigned a different colored blindfold. For example, students in one group will have red blindfolds

and students in another group will have yellow blindfolds. Students are blindfolded and then mixed randomly so they will not know who they are sitting near. The task is for all the members of a group wearing the same colored blindfold to collect themselves as a group in one corner of the room. The first group to gather all its members wins.

Group Tied Together By The Legs

Group members are asked to line up and their legs are tied together with a short length of rope, i.e., each student's right ankle is tied to the left ankle of the student standing next to him. The group's task is to move from one location to another such as across a room. It is usually best to start with two students at first, then four, and then work up to the entire group to avoid excessive confusion. Group members must work together and coordinate their movements if they are to complete the task. The task may be done in two stages, the first being a no talking try, followed by a strategy session and then a second try.

Group Drawing

The group is given the task of drawing a picture together, and each member of the group is given a different colored crayon. Members may contribute either one at a time, with each student limited to thirty seconds or so, or as a whole group with a time limit of three to five minutes.

If this activity is repeated several times, such as in the beginning, the middle, and the end of the overall period that a group meets, the group can compare its drawings at different stages and discuss whether the drawings show any change in the group.

This activity is particularly successful with younger students.

Peg Board

A group of students is given a square board with a hundred or more holes drilled in it and enough pegs to fill the holes. Match sticks which have already been burnt may be used. The group's task is to fill the holes with the pegs in the shortest period of time possible. A group should consist of from five to seven students and one group may compete against another. The activity can be timed. The groups should be given a period of time to plan a strategy before starting the activity.

Group Functioning Activities

The following activities deal with various aspects of group functioning. Although they are listed under specific headings, many of them can be used with a different objective. For example, the group pressure exercise might also be used to show how communication is distorted in groups, or the trust exercise might be used to stimulate a discussion about feelings that the students experience.

Trust - Leading The Blind

Students are paired off and one member of each pair is blindfolded. The other member of the pair is asked to lead the blindfolded member to a set location. Helping the blindfolded student might involve helping him to avoid obstacles that are placed in the path or going up and down stairs. The student who helps the blindfolded student might be asked to help him without being able to speak to him.

The activity may be used to discuss helping behaviors and feelings of trust.

Trust - Better/Betton

Students are paired. One is called the bettor and he makes the bets. The other is called the betton because he is the person on whom his partner is betting. Each pair starts the game with $32 in paper money, which initially is in the control of the bettor. Each pair has four chances to bet and act, in order to reach the goal of accumulating as much money as possible. The rules are:

1. If the bettor bets that the betton will do something and he does it, the bettor gets the amount of money that he bet (maximum bet is $16).

2. If the bettor bets that the betton will do something and he doesn't, then the bettor loses the money that he bet.

3. If the bettor bets $8 or more that the betton will do something, then the betton automatically gets half the amount of the bet, no matter what happens.

4. If the bettor bets that the betton will do something and the betton does it, the betton gets half the amount of the bet.

5. If the bettor bets that the betton will do something and he does not do it, the betton gets the full amount of the bet.

The activity is so organized that a pair can make more money working together and trusting each other than they can by working against each other. Four sample situations that you can bet on are the following. You refers to the bettor and he refers to the betton.

You, the bettor, and he, the betton, caught a squirrel and have kept it as a pet. He takes the squirrel into school and shows it to a biology teacher who teaches both of you. The teacher really likes the squirrel and wants to give him, the betton, an A for bringing it in. The betton will:

1. Take the A and not tell the teacher that you helped catch the squirrel too,
2. Tell the teacher that you caught the squirrel too,
3. Take the A and then talk to you about what he should tell the teacher.

He, the betton, has just finished building a go-cart, and you, the bettor, want to ride it. The betton will:

1. Let you ride if you pay him,
2. Will not let you ride,
3. Share the go-cart with you for free.

He, the betton, has an extra ticket to the movies, and you, the bettor, want to go with him. The betton will:

1. Sell you the ticket at half price,
2. Give the ticket to another friend,
3. Take you along for free,
4. Tear up the ticket in front of you to make you mad.

He, the betton, has just seen you, the bettor, cheat on a test, and he is the only one who saw you cheat. He, the betton, will:

1. Tell the teacher,
2. Ask you for money, and tell the teacher if you don't pay,
3. Not tell anyone,
4. Talk to you about it.

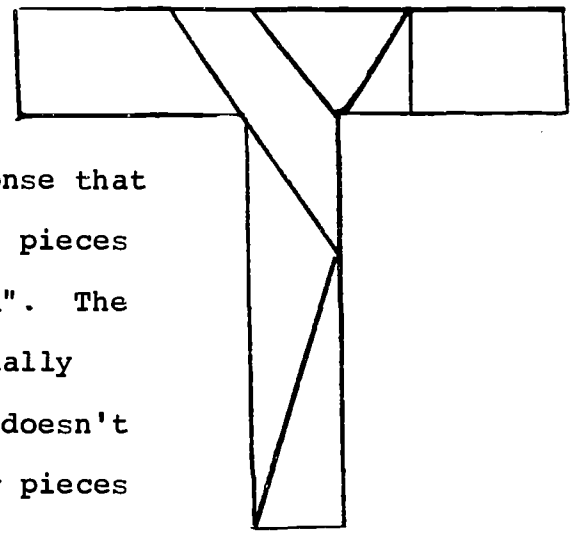
Trust - Falling And Being Caught

The group forms a circle with one person in the middle. The person in the middle closes his eyes and lets himself fall freely to be caught and passed around by the group. This is a fairly threatening exercise and should be used only when appropriate in the latter stages of a group's development.

Communication - Split T

Students are paired and each pair sits back to back. One member of each pair has unassembled pieces of cardboard of various sizes and shapes. The other person has pieces of identical size and shape which are pasted to a piece of backing board to form the shape of a capital T as shown in the diagram below. The students are told that they each have the same number of pieces and that they are of identical size and shape. They are not told the colors of the pieces do not correspond, however. The task of the person with the assembled pieces is to explain as clearly as possible to his partner how to put

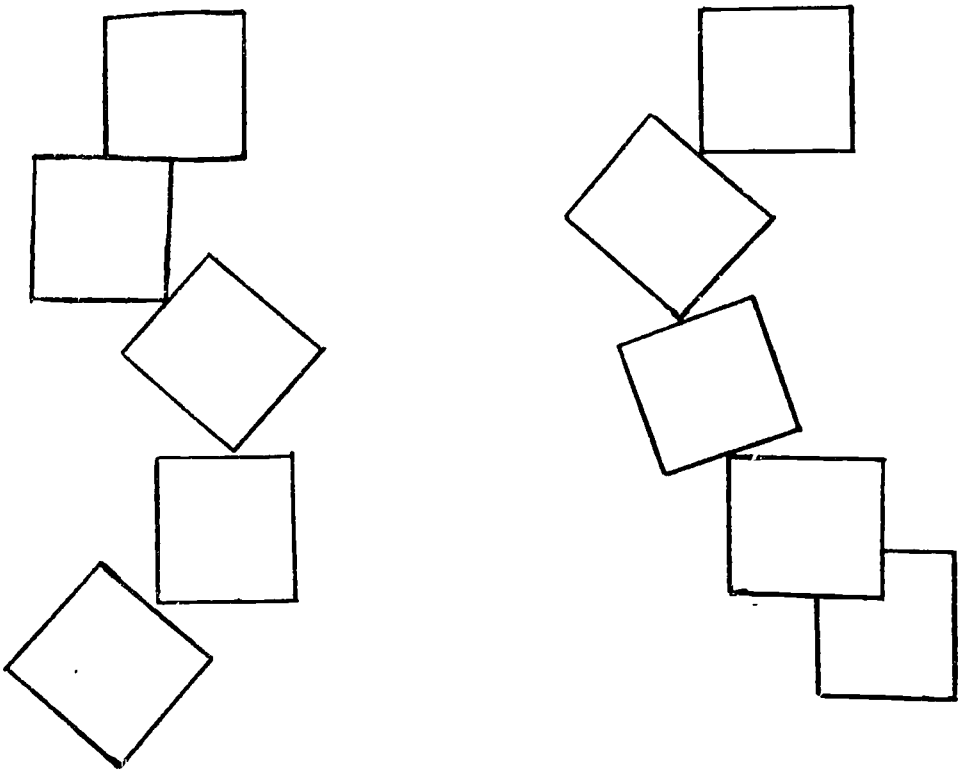
the pieces together to form the shape of a capital T. Although he can speak as much as he wants, the only response that the person who is assembling the pieces can make is "I do not understand". The person giving the directions usually misleads his partner because he doesn't realize that the colors of their pieces do not correspond.



Discussion following this activity can center on the difficulty of communicating without adequate feedback.

Communication - One Way/Two Way Communication

The group is asked to draw a diagram according to directions given by one of the students. While giving instructions for the first diagram, the student must stand with his back to the group and members of the group are not allowed to ask any questions. The student then gives instructions for drawing the second diagram but this time he faces the group and the group is allowed to ask any questions it needs to understand the student's directions. Sample diagrams are shown below. The student should be asked to describe the diagrams by starting at the top and then to describe the relationship of each shape to the one above it.



After drawing the two diagrams, the students can compare the results of following directions that were given without an opportunity for feedback with the results when the students could ask questions and the person giving the directions could observe nonverbal communication such as the students progress and their facial expressions.

By keeping the time, the students can compare how long each description took.

By counting the number of squares accurately drawn out of a possible five for each student, then adding to find the total number of squares accurately drawn by the group, and dividing this total by the number of students in the group, the students can calculate and compare the average number of squares accurately drawn with each description.

The students can also try to guess the number of squares that they each drew correctly before they check to find out the number that they actually drew correctly. Comparing the number of squares that they guess are accurate with the number that are actually accurate can give an idea of the students level of confidence.

Discuss and compare the attitude of the student giving the directions and the attitudes of the students following the directions in the two situations.

Possible findings might be that one way communication is quicker, less accurate, and gives the listener a lower level of confidence. Two way communication might take longer, be more accurate, and be more demanding for the speaker.

Communication - Blind Builder

Students work together in pairs. One member of the pair is blindfolded and then given material to construct something such as a paper airplane. His partner's task is to help him by giving him directions on how to construct his project.

Discussion afterwards may center on the difficulty of communicating when other people see things differently and the problem of adjusting to the needs of other people.

Communication - Gossip Circle

The group leader either shows a picture, preferably one with action and emotional content, or describes an

incident by whispering to one of the students. That student whispers what he has seen or heard to another student and so on until all the students in the group have heard and relayed the message. The students should be told to try to convey as accurately as possible the description of what they see or hear. Instead of whispering, each student may leave the room to hear and convey the message to the next person.

The last student to receive the message tells the whole group what he has heard. His description is compared with the original picture or message to see what changes took place while it was being relayed from one person to another. If the message is written each time rather than spoken, it is possible to check just when and how the message was changed.

Listening - Grandmother's Trunk

Students form a circle. One person starts off by saying "In my grandmother's trunk I found a _____." and he fills in the name of an object such as a book. The next person in the circle repeats what the first person said and adds another object. For example, "In my grandmother's trunk I found a book and a rabbit". The students continue repeating what the person before them said and adding an object until someone can no longer repeat the growing list. Students need to listen carefully to the other members of the group to be able to remember all the objects.

A variation is to use a phrase such as "I am proud of _____" or "I am afraid of" instead of "In my grandmother's trunk I found a _____", thus allowing the students to share some of their feelings with the group.

Another variation is a name game which can help the students learn each others names when the group first meets. The first person starts off with giving his name, for example, I, John, found a watch in the trunk. The next person says John found a watch and I, Henry found an apple in the trunk, and so on, this time with each person repeating names as well as objects.

Listening - Categories

Someone in the group gives the name of a category such as cars, vegetables, or television stars and he starts a beat by alternately clapping his hands and slapping his thighs. Each person in turn names something in that category until someone repeats what somebody else has already said. Students should call out their names in time with the beat to keep the activity going at a quick pace. A variation to stress the listening aspect of the activity is for each person to repeat the word that the previous person used before adding his own, still speaking in time with the beat.

Listening - Continuous Story

One member of the group begins a narrative and develops it. Each person in turn takes over the story where the previous person stopped and supplies a

continuation until the last person supplies an ending. Each person's time should be limited to two or three minutes.

Possible topics that students can develop a story around are ghosts, cars, or gangs. Members of the group can provide sound effects when they feel they are appropriate. If the story is taperecorded, the students can listen to it afterwards.

Listening - Simon Says

One student gives directions for the group to follow by saying "Simon says to _____". Examples are to stand on one foot or to touch your nose. When the student gives a command without prefixing it with Simon says, the students who respond to the command are out.

Activity can also be used to give students who do not normally assert themselves, a chance to lead the group.

Listening - Summerize Before You Speak

It is sometimes helpful in discussions to require that students summerize what the person before them said before they can contribute something of their own. This serves as a check to make sure that they listen to what each other has to say, and is particularly helpful when students interrupt one another or when students go off on their own train of thought unrelated to what the previous person had said.

Group Roles - Roleplaying Group Roles

Students are randomly given cards naming various roles that people take in groups. The roles might be derived from categories that the students suggest themselves after playing fractured square or some other group activity. Students are given a topic to discuss and are asked to take part in the discussion according to the roles on their cards. Examples of roles that have been suggested by students are:

1. Want to have nothing to do with the group.
2. Don't care what we talk about as long as I am the center of attention.
3. Want to keep people on the topic.
4. Don't want to talk about anything except cars.

Discussion afterwards can focus on how the roles people took affected the group task and the feelings students had about the roles.

Leadership - Ranking According to Leadership

A number of chairs equal to the number of people in the group are placed in a line. The chair at one end is designated for the person with the most influence within the group and the chair at the other end is designated for the person with the least influence. The group members are asked to place themselves in the chair that is most appropriate for them in relation to the degree of influence they have in the group.

After everyone has placed themselves, anyone can get up and shift people he feels are sitting in the

wrong chair. This entire process should take place without discussion. When the group is satisfied with the seating arrangement, the members can talk about how they see their own and others' leadership role.

Withdrawal - Rat And Cheese

Group stands in a circle except for one or two members who have withdrawn from the group. The task of the person who has withdrawn is to physically get inside the circle. This may help reinvolve someone in the group. The activity should be used with discretion, after considering the student's reasons for withdrawing and his willingness to rejoin the group.

Group Unity - Relationship Of Individuals To The Group

Students are asked to place themselves physically in relation to the group, based on the degree of closeness they feel to the group and to particular individuals in the group. A definite point should be located in the center of the room representing the highest degree of closeness to the group so that students can place themselves in relation to it. After students place themselves, individuals might be allowed to shift people they feel are in the wrong location.

This activity is actually a physical sociogram. The student's normal seating arrangement might be compared with how the students arrange themselves in this activity. The activity might point out subgroups that are operating within the larger group.

Group Unity - Roleplaying Exercises

The following are some roleplaying exercises which may help to pull a group together.

Ask the students to sit in a circle and imagine there is a powerful magnet in the center of the room which is irresistably pulling them toward it even though they are resisting at the same time. Students should actually go through the motions of being pulled toward the magnet in the center.

Ask two students to come to the center of the room and become parts of a working machine. Ask the rest of the group to join in and become additional parts of that machine so that everyone is involved.

Group Pressure Exercises

Students roleplay a courtroom scene. The policeman, the prosecuting attorney, and all the witnesses except one are shown a picture of the crime being tried. The policeman and the witnesses who were shown the picture take the stand and testify. The one remaining witness takes the stand after he has been shown a picture of the crime with some of the circumstances changed, however. Thus a situation is set for conflicting testimony. The testimony of the last witness is compared with the testimony of the other witnesses to see if he changed what he saw in the altered picture to fit more closely with what everybody else saw.

Another exercise along the same line is to draw two lines the same length on the blackboard. All the students

except for one are primed to say that one line is shorter than the other beforehand. The remaining student is then asked if one of the lines is shorter. Although the two lines are the same, the pressure of everyone else saying they are different may affect the last student's response.

Decision-making - Brainstorming

Students are asked to give as many responses as possible to a given question during a specified time period. They should be asked to give their responses spontaneously as they occur without evaluating them. Afterwards, they can rank their responses in terms of appropriateness or usefulness. By brainstorming, the group can arrive at a comprehensive list of possibilities from which they can evaluate the best choices.

In order to become familiar with the technique, it is both fun and instructive to use a practice exercise. For example, tell the students that a truck carrying a load of objects was wrecked and that the driver has no choice but to give the objects away or sell them for a low price. Since there is not enough demand in the vicinity to use the objects for their original purpose, the driver must brainstorm other uses for the objects. In three to five minutes, the group should throw out as many ideas as it can for various uses for some object such as pipe cleaners, ping pong balls, or brassieres.

Decision-making - Ranking

After students have brainstormed a list of possibilities, they may rank order them as a group in terms of

importance or feasibility. To reach a group consensus, that is a decision that all the group members take part in and can agree to, the group can, using the following guidelines,

1. Use logic and avoid arguing for your own individual judgements.
2. Only support solutions which you at least partly agree with. Do not change your mind only to reach an agreement or to avoid conflict.
3. View differences of opinion as helpful rather than hindering.
4. Avoid conflict reducing techniques such as majority vote, averaging, or trading in reaching decisions.

One practice ranking exercise is called the bomb shelter. Students rank from 1 to 18 the order in which they would let members of different professions into the group's bomb shelter in case of an emergency. The following is a sample list.

Baseball Player	Math Teacher
Black Militant Leader	Soldier
Actress	Policeman
Typist	College Student
Social Worker	Minister
Grocer	Artist
English Teacher	Cook
Musician	Janitor
Writer	Lawyer

Students should do an individual ranking first, before they try to reach group consensus on a ranking. The list may be shortened to make a consensus less difficult.

Another practice ranking exercise is the NASA activity. Students are asked to rank order from 1 to 15 the usefulness of the items listed below if they crash landed on the moon and had to walk across the moon's surface to reach help. The number in parentheses after each item is the

rank order that scientists at NASA gave to that item. The students can compare their final results with those reached by the NASA scientists. As in the bomb shelter, the students should do an individual ranking first before doing a group consensus ranking. It may be useful to appoint observers to provide feedback on how well the group operated together and whether it used the resources of all the group members in reaching its decisions.

Box Of Matches (15)
Food Concentrate (4)
50 Feet Of Nylon Rope (6)
Parachute Silk (8)
Portable Heating Unit (13)
Two .45 Pistols (11)
One Case Of Dehydrated Milk (12)
Two 100 lb. Tanks Of Oxygen (1)
Stellar Map Of The Moon's Constellations (3)
Life Raft (9)
Magnetic Compass (14)
5 Gallons Of Water (2)
Light Flares (10)
First Aid Kit With Injection Needles (7)
Solar Powered AM/FM Receiver-transmitter

Observation Skills

The group is asked to carefully observe a student. The student is then asked to leave the room and to change three things about himself. When he returns, the group is asked to tell him what the three things are that he changed.

Awareness Of Self And Others

The activities in this section may be used to help members of the group gain an increased awareness of themselves and of others and to help them share this information. Some activities will help stimulate discussion about problems the students have relating to other people and help them deal with this.

Interviewing Pairs

This activity is helpful when a group first meets together to help the students to get to know each other. Have students form pairs and interview one another. Before interviewing each other, the students might be asked what they would like to know about each other and from this they could develop a list of questions to use in the interview. After interviewing, each student briefly reports back to the total group what he has learned about his partner. The person being described should have a chance to respond to the report about him and perhaps be asked to tell the group one additional thing which would help the group know him better.

Name Game

Have students form a circle. Bring one student to the center of the circle and pin the name of another student who is in the group on his back. The person in the middle should not be able to see the name on his back although the rest of the group can. The task of the person in the center is to find out who's name is on his back by asking the group questions which can only be answered by yes or no. If the person can not guess after four or five questions, he can get a free clue and a final guess.

Blindfolded Description

Students sit in a circle. One member of the group is blindfolded while standing in the middle of the circle. Another group member comes forward and stands in front of

the blindfolded student. The task of the blindfolded person is to identify the person standing before him using only his sense of touch.

A variation of this activity is to have the students sit in a circle and ask them to remember who is sitting on either side of them. Then everyone is blindfolded and moved to a different part of the room. The task of the group is to reform itself in a circle with the students sitting next to the same people they were sitting next to originally. Students are not allowed to talk and can only identify one another by their sense of touch.

Sharing Activity

One person lies on the floor with his head on another person's stomach. Ask the person on the bottom to think of something funny that has happened to him. Encourage the person on the bottom to laugh if he isn't already. Ask him to sit up and tell the other student the funny thing that happened to him. Ask the other student to tell something funny that has happened to him. Ask the first person to show the other student something about the other person's face that he likes without talking, then something that he doesn't like. Ask the other student to do the same. Ask them to tell each other the best experience they ever had.

This activity can have many variations with physical as well as verbal communication.

Fantasizing

Ask the students to list everyone in the group including themselves. After each person's name, ask the students to write down the animal that that person most closely resembles. Students can then volunteer to have the group members in turn tell them what animal they resembled and to discuss the reasons for selecting a particular animal. This activity provides a relatively nonthreatening approach to providing feedback on students as they are seen by other group members.

Instead of animals, other possibilities for fantasizing are the costume that would be most appropriate for a student if he went to a costume ball, the kind of house that would be most appropriate for a student, or the kind of future job that would be most suitable for a student.

A variation of this activity is for each student to write down on a card the animal or costume that he feels would be most appropriate for himself. The cards are collected, mixed up, and then read off one at a time. The students would then try to guess who wrote the card. Students could find out whether other members of the group group agreed with their image of themselves.

Another variation involves roleplaying. Students are paired. One student is a lump of clay waiting to be shaped and the other student is a sculptor. The task of the sculptor is to shape the student who is a lump of clay into the animal that that student most closely resembles. The student then tries to guess what kind of animal he is. Students then reverse roles.

Roleplaying Another Person

A student roleplays another member of the group, taking into consideration facial expressions, distinctive gestures, and body movements such as style of walking. He should not speak. The students then try to guess who he is roleplaying. If the students do not guess immediately, the roleplayer may try again, this time incorporating the student's voice and manner of speaking.

Situations

Pass out to the students cards with various situations written out on them. Ask the students to respond, either verbally or by roleplaying, to that situation. The situation should be relevant to the students, involving people that they normally have contact with such as teachers, parents, or friends. Sample situations are:

The school bully threatens that if you don't give him your lunch money, he will beat you up after school. He is obviously stronger than you are. How do you handle this?

John sits behind you in class and creates a disturbance. The teacher blames you for it, however. How do you handle this?

You and Bill are looking at model cars in a hobby shop. Bill tries to persuade you to shoplift one of the models while he distracts the storekeeper. You are hesitant because Bill has gotten in trouble before but you also want to remain friends with him. What do you do?

You have gone to a party and returned home later than you expected. Although your parents set a deadline for you at midnight, you actually didn't get home until almost two in the morning. What happens next?

Situations such as these can help stimulate discussion about areas of concern to the students such as how they get along with and feel about their parents, teachers, and friends. Students should be encouraged to look at alternate ways of handling the problems illustrated by these situations and decide what course of behavior would produce the best results.

Students should be encouraged to describe situations from their own experience that the group can discuss and help them with. It may be helpful for the student to roleplay himself and for students in the group to take the other roles after the student has carefully described the situation and the people involved. The group can provide the student with a relatively nonthreatening setting for experimenting with alternate responses to the situation which may be more rewarding to the student. If a student is experimenting with a behavior which is contrary to what he really feels, he may express his real feelings by turning his head and speaking in an aside, while still going through with his new behavior. Roleplaying can help to make the situation more concrete and increase the involvement of the other students.

Positive and Negative Feedback

The students sit in a circle. Ask a volunteer to sit in the middle after you explain the activity to the students. Ask the students to tell the person in the middle one thing that they like about him and one thing that they dislike about him. The students should briefly explain why they like and dislike the things that they tell the student. The person in the middle should have a chance to respond after each student tells what it is that he likes and dislikes.

The students should be told to make their comments about how the person behaves or about how he relates to other people and not about his physical appearance. The purpose of the activity is to help the students understand how others see them rather than to hurt someone's feelings. Although the activity seems threatening, students have usually been eager to sit in the middle and find out what others like and dislike about themselves.

Who Am I

The students are given a checklist of adjectives and are asked to check the eight words that best describe themselves. They are also given checklists for each of the group members and are asked to check off the eight words that best describe each of them. They should write the name of the person they are describing at the bottom of each list. The following are some adjectives that could be included on the list:

happy loud friendly silly sad quiet

unfriendly	serious	smart	dumb	cheat	bully
fat	skinny	ugly	honest	white	black
handsome	dishonest	tall	short	Puerto	Rican

Several blank spaces can be left at the bottom of the checklist so that students can add other adjectives.

Instead of the checklist, the true and false form reproduced below may be used. Students are given a form for each member of the group including themselves. They are asked to mark true each sentence which they feel is appropriate for the person being described. They are asked to mark false each sentence that is not appropriate.

Name _____ Date_____

Counseling Group_____ _____

TRUE AND FALSE

_____ someone I could trust to watch my lunch and money while I am wrestling

_____ someone who would give me a tough time if I made him mad

_____ someone who might trip me just because he would think it was funny

_____ someone who can easily get other people to do what he wants them to do

_____ someone who rea-ly wants people to like him

_____ someone who talks a lot but doesn't back it up with action

_____ someone I would like to know better

_____ someone who would do a good job organizing the guys for a camping trip

_____ someone who wants his own way no matter what

_____ someone who prefers to do things on his own rather than with other people

_____ someone who would be a good companion on an overnight camping trip

_____ someone who would help me if I hurt myself and needed help

_____ someone I enjoy being with because he makes things fun

_____ someone who always manages to spoil things that we do together

_____ someone who might dime on me just to save his own skin

_____ someone who dislikes some people because of their race

_____ someone who always talks even when others don't want to listen

_____ someone who might steal money from my locker even though we are friends

_____ someone who would lie just to see me get in trouble

_____ someone who is a teacher's pet

The checklists or forms should be collected after the students finish filling them out. The sheets describing each person should be sorted out and assembled in piles. The number of times that each word on the checklist was checked off or that each sentence was marked true can be tabulated to show how the group as a whole sees each person. These results can be read off to the student for him to respond to and for the group to discuss. The student can compare the list containing his self-description with the list showing how the group sees him.

The students might be asked if there is anything they have learned about how others see them and whether there is anything they would like to change about themselves.

The activity may be repeated at intervals over the total period of time that the group meets to see what changes take place in how the group members perceive each other.

Roleplaying Feelings

Students are randomly given cards naming different feelings such as bored, happy, angry, sad, joyful, or scared. They are asked to let the group know what that feeling is without talking by their facial expression and body movements or to roleplay a situation that might produce that feeling. After the student has finished roleplaying, the other students try to guess the feeling he was expressing. The students then might be asked if they ever feel that way and why.

Proudwhip

Students form a circle. Each student in turn is asked to repeat a phrase such as "I am proud of _____" and to fill in an appropriate ending. Other samples of phrases that the students can complete are "Today, I was happy about _____" or "I am afraid of _____". Students should have the option to pass if they do not want to say something.

This activity can be used to help the students share their feelings. It can sometimes be a good way of starting or summing up a discussion.

Additional Activities

The following are some additional activities. They include some approaches to group discussion, some diagrams and charts useful in discussion and for observation, and some group games for recreational purposes.

Shot Gun Questions

Divide students into subgroups of three or four people. Ask the group a series of related questions about a topic such as school or fighting. The students should have a time limit to respond to each question, usually from one to three minutes depending on the question. The students respond in turn to each question, attempting to give each student a chance to answer before the time limit is up. It is usually best to make sure that the first couple of questions are relatively nonthreatening.

This discussion format gives everyone more chances to participate by breaking them down into small groups. The short time period for each question helps to keep the discussion moving. The students need to be fairly well motivated and able to work together for this approach to work. If the groups can record what they have to say on a taperecorder, it both helps to stimulate the discussion and gives them a chance to listen and evaluate how they worked together. Because of the time limit, a discussion might be cut off that the students would like to continue.

Cards

If students tend to interrupt each other in discussion and to talk out of turn, it may be helpful to have the students sit in a circle and require each student to place a card with his name on it on the floor in front of him when he wants to talk. Students are recognized in turn by going around the circle. Once a student speaks, he

must wait for everyone in the circle to have a chance to speak before he has another chance to speak.

Voting

Students are asked if they disagree, agree, or agree strongly with some statements. If they disagree, they sit on their hands, if they agree, they raise their hand, if they agree strongly, they wave their hand rapidly in the air. This activity gives a quick way for the students to show how they feel about issues that they vote on.

Questions

Ask the students in the group to think of question they would like to ask about other people in the group. One person starts off by asking another person a question. That person asks another and so on. However no one is allowed to answer a question.

This activity gives people a chance to ask questions they might not normally ask. It lets people know what other people would like to find out about them. It is particularly helpful when the group feels bogged down.

Ramifications

Take a relatively minor incident and discuss as extensively as possible its ramifications. This would include the factors that led up to it, its implications for the future, and what it would be like if it hadn't happened. This can give the students an idea how complex

even a simple action can be. For example, a student decides to throw an eraser in class.

Factors that led to the situation

1. The eraser was lying next to him.
2. He wasn't doing anything else.
3. The class bored him.
4. Another student egged him on.
5. The teacher wasn't looking.
6. He wanted attention.
7. He was angry anyway because someone stole his lunch.

Future ramifications

1. Teacher might get mad.
2. Might affect his grade.
3. Might get home late because he was kept after school.
4. Kids might look up to him.
5. He might continue to get into trouble.
6. He might forget about being bored; etc.

What if it hadn't happened

1. He might have played baseball instead of staying after school.
2. He might have gotten a better grade.
3. He might have stayed out of more serious trouble later on.
4. Students might think he is a sissy; etc.

Giving And Receiving Help

One person states a problem. He is given help by two other people, each using a different approach. The two helpers each have five minutes to help him. A fourth

person can be used as an observer.

The first helper recalls and describes similiar problems he has had and tells how he has handled them. He gives specific recommendations on how he would solve the problem.

The second helper raises questions to help the person diagnose it and arrive at his own solution. He can not give advice or relate how he handled similar problems.

Have the person with the problem state which helper was the most helpful and state why.

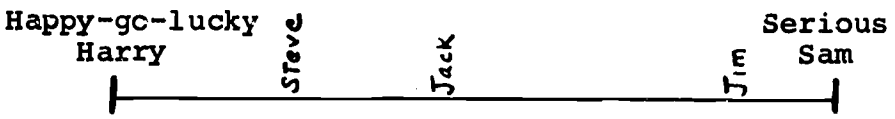
Rules For Group Meetings

Some possible ground rules for group discussion are:

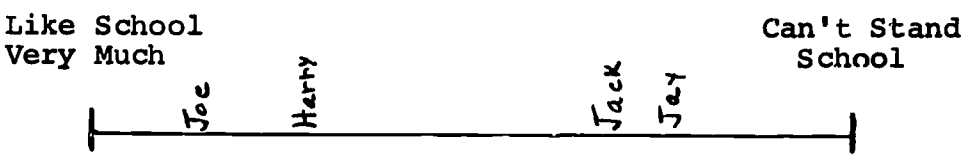
1. In discussions, one person speaks at a time.
2. If someone is working on something during a meeting or some people are working in a group, no one may interrupt them or destroy their work.
3. Any person, at any time, can report to the group that someone has broken one of these rules. If this happens, we will stop what we are doing and discuss the matter for no more than five minutes. We will then vote on whether the person is guilty or not. A record will be kept of people found guilty, and they may be excluded from an activity if the group decides to do this. It is the job of the group to help people learn not to break rules as well as to report people who interrupt the group by breaking rules.
4. Any person, at any time, can stop the group and ask what is going on or why we are doing something. The group's activity can also be stopped by someone who wishes to point out something that is happening in the group such as I am getting mad or Fred looks bored.

Continuum

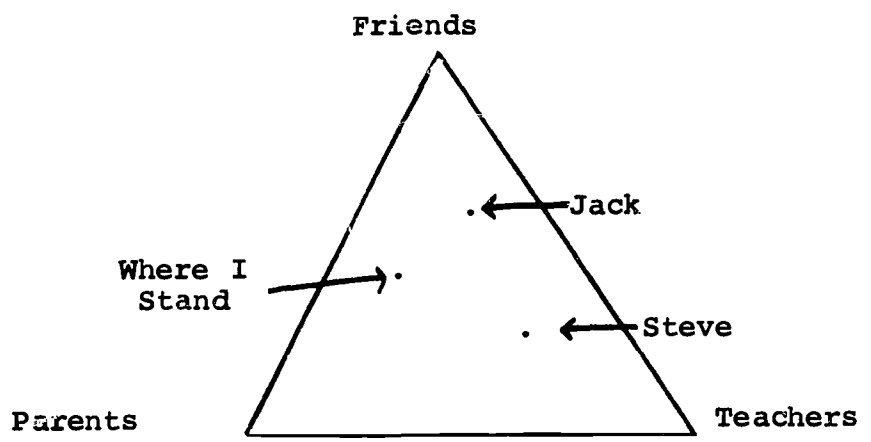
A continuum is how different people fit between two extremes. It can show how different people in the group feel about something by having them place their name at the appropriate point along the line. For example, do you feel that you are closer to Serious Sam or Happy-go-lucky Harry.



Another example is like school very much at one extreme and can't stand school at another.



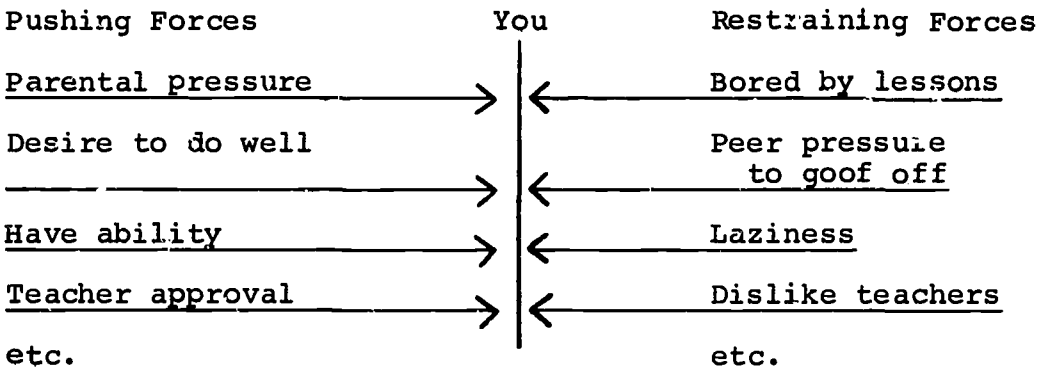
If there are three different categories to chose from, students can place a dot at the appropriate spot within a triangle to show how they feel. For example, are you most easily influenced by your friends, your parents, or your teachers.



Forcefield

The forcefield is a diagram which can be used for analyzing the opposing forces in a problem situation. First describe the problem. Then list the forces pushing toward the solution of the problem and then list the forces restraining the solution of the problem. The two lists can then be put in rank order of importance.

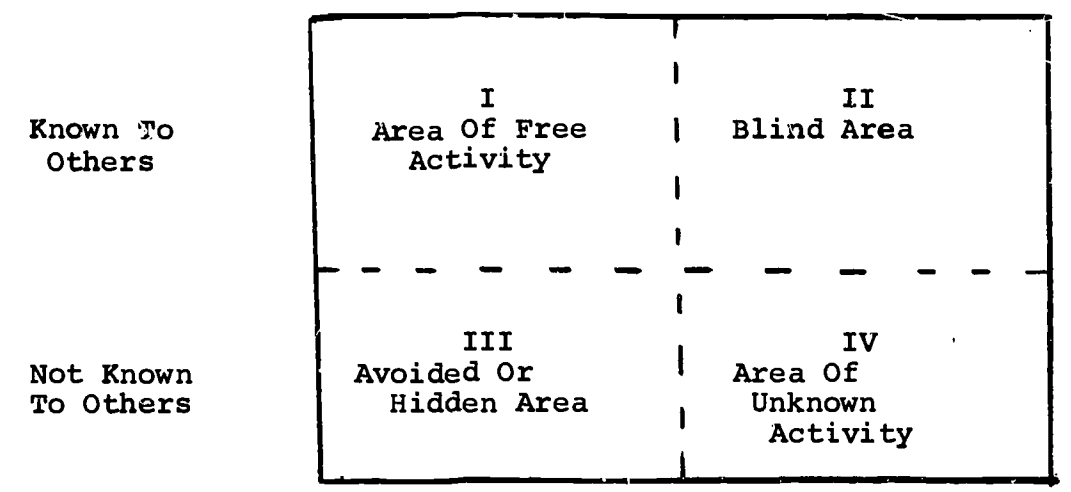
Problem: Getting Good Marks



The line in the middle represents the equilibrium between the two categories of force. The lines position can change according to changes in individual factors on either side. By designating the individual forces, the problem can be clarified and therefore more easily worked out.

You can then discuss which of these pushing and restraining forces can be changed in order to solve the problem. Try to predict how helpful changing that force would be.

The Johari Window — Joe Luft and Harry Ingram, Calif.



By shifting the dotted lines, this diagram can illustrate the relative influence of each area of activity for a particular person. The entire Square represents a picture of a person. It assumes that every person has a four part self: I, where he knows himself and which he lets others know; II, which he does not know but which other people can see in him; III, where he knows himself and tries successfully to keep others from seeing; IV, where neither he nor others know him. The dotted line which can shift back and forth to fit each person, can give a person an idea of how much of his self is shared with others, how much is kept to himself, and how much he is aware of himself.

Checklist For Observing Group Behaviors

Ask a student to observe the behavior of the other members of the group. Have him tally on a grid the number of times each individual behaves according to the categories listed on the grid sheet. For example, a student might observe a group playing fractured square using the categories of behavior that the students developed after playing the first round. A sample of his observation sheet is shown below. Many other behaviors may also be used.

Behavior Observed	Tom	Bill	Jack	Steve	Al	Ted
Grabs	//		/		///	
Helps		//	/	/		
Drops Out					/	/
Leads		/	//		/	
Talks					/	/
Goof Offs			/		//	//

Checklist For Observing Group Behavior

This is a sample of another behavior checklist. Observe two people. Each time one of them acts in the way listed below, put his initial on the line that behavior is listed on. For example, if you are observing Steve and Joe, and Joe talks to the group, you would put a J on the line for talking to the group.

Listening to the teacher_____

Listening to a friend_____

Listening to the group J

Talking to the teacher_____

Talking to a friend_____

Talking to the group_____

Clowning around_____

Bored_____

Happy S

Reading_____

Curious_____

Excited S

Annoyed_____

Leading or directing S

Helping_____

Nervous_____

Sleppy_____

This list was developed by students to help them observe their classroom behavior. The observer should be told that a student can act in more than one way at the same time. For example, Steve might be happy, excited,

and leading other people at the same time. So an S should go on the line that each of those behaviors is listed on.

Recreational Games

The following games can give the group a chance to have fun and be active. Students may suggest games that they are familiar with. The students may pool their knowledge of games by brainstorming all the games they are familiar with.

British Bull Dog or Call The Gang Over

Draw two parallel lines, 20 feet apart or more, on the floor. One person stands halfway between the lines and the rest of the group lines up along one of the lines. The entire group runs toward the other line, trying to get across to it. The person in the middle tries to catch people and lift them off the ground while they are running across. The people who are caught join the person in the middle and try to catch others. The group runs back and forth until the entire group is caught. Swinging elbows and fists is not allowed.

Steal The Bacon

Divide the group in half. Line each half up, facing each other, about 20 to 30 feet apart. Place the "bacon" which can be an eraser, shoe, or other object, halfway between the lines. Assign a number to each person in each group, starting with one, two, three, etc. Call off one of the numbers that have been assigned to the students.

The person in each group with that number goes out to try to get the bacon. The object is for him to pick up the bacon and make it back across his line without being tagged by the student who has been called out from the other side. Each team gets a point for each time one of its members successfully steals the bacon and makes it across his line without being tagged and for when one of its members tags a member of the other team while that person is carrying the bacon. Students are not allowed to throw or kick the bacon to get it closer to their side. Students can block but they cannot shove one another. If two students are at a standstill, another number may be called.

Cubbity-Cubbity

The group is divided in half. Each half is lined up facing the other, 20 feet apart, with a line drawn on the floor halfway between them. A member of one team crosses over the center line into the other side's territory and he must keep on repeating "cubbity-cubbity" while he is there. His objective is to tag a member of the other side and then to escape back to his own side without being tackled. The students on the other side try to tackle him before he can tag someone and escape back to his own side. Each time someone is successfully tagged or tackled, he must drop out. Teams take turns crossing into the other's territory.

Relays

Some possible versions are:

Piggyback

Wheelbarrow carry

Spoon in mouth balancing an egg or ping-pong ball

Students with legs tied together

Crawling

All fours with your back to the ground

Run to chair carrying balloon, sit on balloon until it breaks and run back

Dribbling ball

Pushing ball along the floor with your head

Hopping on one foot

Potato sack

Fast walk

Bennis, W.G., Schein, E.H. Interpersonal Dynamics. Homewood, Illinois: Irwin, 1964.

Berne, E. Games People Play. New York: Grove Press, 1964.

Bion, W.H. Experience in Groups. New York: Basic Books, 1959 (A Tavistock Publications).

Bradford, L.P. Group Development. Washington, D.C.: National Training Laboratories, 1961.

Bradford, L.P. and Benne, K.D. T-Group Theory and Laboratory Method: Innovation in Re-Education. New York: Wiley, 1964.

Cartwright, D., and Zander, A. Group Dynamics. Evanston, Illinois: Row-Peterson, 1965.

Hare, A.P. Handbook of Small Groups Research. Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press, 1962.

Maslow, Abraham H. Toward a Psychology of Being. New York: Van Nostrand, 1968.

Miles, H.B. Learning to Work in Groups. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1959.

Mosher, R., Carle, R., and Kehas, C. Guidance: An Examination. New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1965.

Ojemann, R. Developing a Program for Education in Human Behavior. State University of Iowa, 1966.

Olmsted, N. The Small Group. New York: Random House, 1961.

Perls, Frederick. Gestalt Therapy Verbatim. Real People Press, 1969.

Redl, Fritz and Wineman, David. Children Who Hate. New York: Free Press, 1951.

Rogers, Carl. On Becoming a Person. Boston, Mass.: Houghton-Mifflin, 1961.

Shephard, C.R. Small Groups: Some Sociological Perspectives. San Francisco: Chandler, 1964.

Wrenn, C. Gilbert. The Counselor in a Changing World. Washington, D.C.: American Personnel and Guidance Association, 1962.

Department of Educational Psychology, Temple University, Philadelphia, Pa.

National Training Laboratories Institute Associated with the National Education Association
1201 Sixteenth Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036

The Pennsylvania Advancement School

JUDGE THOMAS REED, PRESIDENT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

DR. MARK R. SHEDD
SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

THOMAS K. MINTER
DIRECTOR

FIFTH AND LUZERNE STREETS
PHILADELPHIA, PA. 19140
BA 6-4653

Published by The Pennsylvania Advancement School
Harold J. Jones, Printer-Disseminator